

# A New Direction for Veterans and Troops

## A NEW DIRECTION FOR VETERANS & TROOPS

Under Democratic leadership since 2007, New Direction Congresses have made historic gains for America's Troops, Veterans, and Military Families.

## STATUS

## EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

New GI Bill  
for the 21st Century takes effect August 1 to restore promise  
of a full, four-year college education for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan; veterans can sign up for  
now.

Give businesses a \$2,400 tax credit for hiring unemployed  
veterans.

Provide nearly 2 million disabled veterans a \$250  
Economic Recovery payment.

Help military family homeowners harmed by the housing  
crisis.

Expand relief, homeownership opportunities, and refinancing options for returning veterans through VA home loans.

Create a new Veterans Corps to provide services to veterans and military families, as well create volunteer opportunities for veterans to put them back to work.

## STRENGTHEN HEALTH CARE

Increase funding  
for veterans' health care and other services by \$17.7 billion (more than 40%)  
since January 2007 --  
including the largest single increase in the history of the  
VA. This is more of an increase in less than three years than  
the GOP-controlled Congress provided in 12  
years.

Strengthened  
quality health care for 5.8 million patients -- adding more than 8,000 new  
doctors and nurses since 2007

Veterans' budget this year hailed as "cause for celebration" by American Legion, provides veterans' health care and other services the largest funding increase (nearly 12%) ever requested by a President.

Expands  
mental health screening and treatment

Ends  
Bush's ban on enrolling modest-income veterans for VA health care

Allows  
Congress to provide VA medical investments one year in advance to ensure sufficient, timely and predictable funding

Strongly  
supported by major veterans' organizations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

Clean up the scandal of inadequate support for our wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and facilities nationwide.

Improve outpatient medical care, restore integrity and efficiency to disability evaluations, cut red-tape

Smooth the transition from the Armed Forces to VA system—

implementing a single, accurate paperless health record from enlistment through retirement years

Rebuild and renovate VA and military hospitals

Strengthen mental health services critical to the estimated 620,000 returning troops suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, or traumatic brain injuries (TBI) from Iraq or Afghanistan.



Expand

VA mental health care services, invest one-third more than in FY 2006, and provide three years of more VA health care eligibility for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans

Require comprehensive DOD policy to address TBI and PTSD, establish a DOD Center of Excellence on Psychological Health and TBI, guarantee veterans a mental health assessment within 30 days, expand hiring of mental health professionals, and strengthen DOD training for better detection of PTSD

Invest  
in DOD research for TBI and PTSD, along with counseling, suicide prevention,  
tele-health and risk reduction efforts for troops and  
families

Establish comprehensive suicide prevention services for  
veterans and a 24-hour toll- free suicide hotline, helping to  
prevent an estimated 1,200 suicides in first  
year

Prevent  
TRICARE and veterans health care fee increases proposed by  
President Bush.

## IMPROVE BENEFITS FOR TROOPS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

Give  
troops a pay raise of 3.5 percent in 2008 and 3.9 percent in 2009 -- larger than  
Bush budget in both years.

Retroactively  
provide more than 170,000 service members and veterans with \$500 for every month  
they were forced to serve under stop-loss orders since  
2001.

Address the  
396,000 veterans' claim backlog and the 177 day average wait for veterans to  
access earned benefits by adding 7,100 new claims  
processors.

Build new transition centers for wounded warriors, more  
military child care centers, and better barracks and military family  
housing.

Provide Family Medical Leave for families of soldiers wounded in combat.

Reduce Military Families Tax on surviving spouses.

## REBUILD THE AMERICAN MILITARY

Provide troops in Iraq and Afghanistan with better equipment, including Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles proven to save lives.

Create Strategic Reserve Readiness Fund to rapidly address military equipment shortfalls.

Ensure more equipment, training, and body armor for troops.



Strengthen National Guard preparedness for disaster response here at home, including providing more equipment.

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Signed Into Law, 110th Congress

= Signed Into Law, 111th  
Congress

= Passed House, 111th  
Congress